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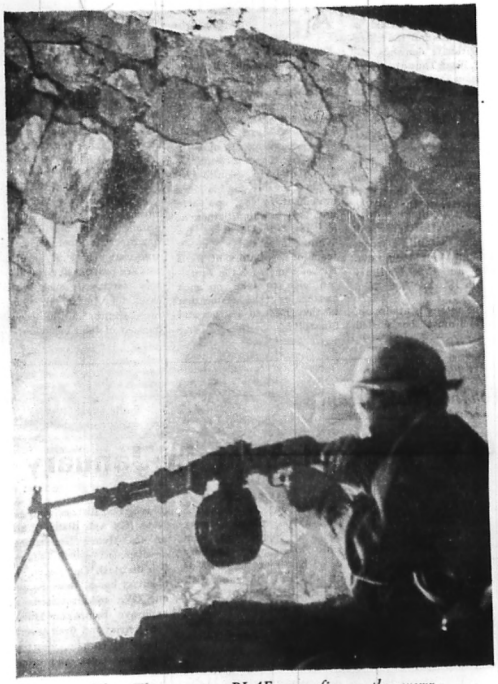


Thua Thien province PLAF open fire on the enemy

PRESIDENT HO CHI MINH THANKS SAMDECH NORODOM SIHANOUK

PRESIDENT Ho Chi Minh sent on Feb. 7 a message to Cambodian Head of State Samdech Norodom Sihanouk thanking him for his full support of the just position of the Vietnamese people at the four-party Paris Conference on Viet Nam (1).

The message reads :

"On behalf of the Vietnamese people and the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, I wish to convey our hearty thanks to Samdech Head of State and the Royal Government of Cambodia for their total support to the righteous position of the Vietnamese people at the Paris quadripartite Conference on Viet Nam.

"The U.S. imperialists who have been meeting with heavy setbacks in Viet Nam, cannot avoid complete defeat. But they still continue to intensify their war of aggression in South Viet Nam, refuse to withdraw unconditionally U.S. and satellite troops from there and try to maintain the present Saigon puppet administration.

"The Vietnamese people warmly hail Samdech Head of State and the Royal Government of Cambodia for having strongly denounced the U.S. schemes to prolong their military occupation in South Viet Nam and impose on the South Vietnamese people a puppet regime created by the U.S. and for demanding that the U.S. let the South Vietnamese people live in complete independence and freedom. Such an action is a great encouragement for our people in the present stage of struggle against U.S. aggression, and a splendid manifestation of the Vietnamese-Khmer militant solidarity.

"Please accept the assurances of my highest and most fraternal consideration".

(1) *See Viet Nam Courrier no 203.*

FIERCE CLASHES WITH US-PUPPET

units around Saigon, in the Central Highlands and in the Mekong Delta, with more than **2,000** *adverse casualties*

- **Northwest, Northeast, South and Southwest of Saigon : 2 enemy battalions and 7 companies wiped out or decimated, 40 military vehicles destroyed.**
- Operation "Binh Tay 50" foiled by PLAF of Gia Lai with nearly 400 U.S.-puppets wiped out.
- **8 enemy battalions besieged in Ben Tre, losing 150 men and 7 aircraft downed in the first 2 days.**
- In January 1969, South Viet Nam PLAF sank or burnt 130 war vessels and combat launches.

Flowers and Crackers

WHAT Vietnamese child does not dream of that long night, the eve of Têt, when crackers of all kinds explode as the last hour of the "outgoing" year strikes and continue exploding for days, strewing courts and lanes with multicoloured confetti, an image of spring, of nature reborn and blossoming, of man happy to live and to walk with vigorous strides towards the future? Nature and man alike take on a new appearance, love of life and mirth are shared by all, ancestors are remembered, children's eyes shine, and for a few days grownups forget about their worries and think only of the days ahead. What Vietnamese does not recall with emotion the Têts of his childhood, full of the first joys and promises of life, and does not feel younger when he hears the crackers of the new year ?

And yet, there are men in Viet Nam for whom those explosions of joy constitute a veritable nightmare. They are neither neurotic nor delirious, but Têt crackers cause them to turn livid. For years now, the men in power in Saigon have been terrified by the approach of Têt, and their police go on a crackers-hunt every time the festival draws near. Crackers have been outlawed by Diem and his successors. Yet to forbid Vietnamese to set off crackers when Têt comes is tantamount to banning Christmas trees among Christians !

TRADITIONS, too, take on a new look. Now, the "traditional" joy of Têt is inextricably mingled in the heart of each Vietnamese with memories of Têt 1968, when in lieu of the traditional crackers, NFL shells and rockets exploded among Yankees and puppets. "This spring will outshine all previous ones," President Ho Chi Minh had said in his 1968 New Year message. For the people of Viet Nam, what finer memories could there be

(Continued page 2)

A CRAFTY U.S. PROPOSAL

IN three successive sessions, the American delegation to the Paris conference proposed as first item on the agenda the problem of the DMZ lying between North and South Viet Nam. At the Jan. 23 meeting, Mr. Cabot Lodge declared, "The search for peace can begin in the DMZ". At the Feb. 6 sitting, he invoked a series of specious arguments to back his initiative.

What the envoy from Washington glossed over was that his proposal constituted a mere continuation of the U.S. "aggression of South Viet Nam by the North" myth.

Everyone knows that such charge is utterly absurb and facts have proved that in Viet Nam, the aggressor is U.S. imperialism whose aggression did not date back only from yesterday. During the Vietnamese people's first national resistance to French colonialists (1945-1954), on which side was the United States? On that of colonialist France to which they gave an aid which defrayed 80 per cent of her Indochina war expenditures from June 1950 to May 1954. Who tried to stall the smooth proceedings, then successful conclusion, of the Geneva Conference which recognized the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Viet Nam? Again the United States whose President Eisenhower declared less than 24 hours after the Geneva Agreements were signed, "the United States has not itself been party to, or bound by, the decisions taken by the Conference". And it was on U.S. instigation that Ngo Dinh Diem rejected the general elections stipulated for July 1956 to reunify Viet Nam.

For some time now, the rulers in Washington have been speaking of a "return to the Geneva Accords" they themselves challenged. This is a trick to deceive public opinion and camouflage their aggression in Viet Nam, and at the same time an attempt to cling to South Viet Nam by wresting the Geneva Agreements to gain what they have been unable to achieve on the battlefield. For them, the accords are confined to certain military clauses, in particular those dealing with the DMZ. Their bad faith was exposed by Minister of State Xuan Thuy at the Jan. 30 session of the Paris conference: by insistingly raising the DMZ issue, Mr. Xuan Thuy said, they wanted to obscure in people's mind the fact that the war in Viet Nam was one between the American aggressors, their satellites and their henchmen on the one side, and the South Viet Nam people and armed forces on the other. The Geneva Agreements in their entirety, including clauses on the DMZ, were wrecked by U.S. committing to South Viet Nam, by sea and by air of over half a million GIs and over 60,000 satellite troops, as well as by the sending every day to South Viet Nam, also from the U.S. and by sea and by air, of huge amounts of arms and ammunitions and military equipment.

To put an end to the war in Viet Nam, it is advisable to begin with a clear appraisal of the situation and go back to the source. The April 8, 1965 four points of the DRVN and the Nov.3, 1968 five points to the NFL have been put forth to this effect. If a sound settlement is to be found at the Paris conference, the DRVN four points and NFL five points should be taken as basis and the following legitimate demands laid by Mr. Xuan Thuy at the Jan. 30 session given due consideration:

1. The U.S. Government must stop its war of aggression against Viet Nam. It must put a final end to all infringements of the sovereignty, and threats to the security, of the DRVN.

2. It must withdraw all U.S. and satellite troops from South Viet Nam, dismantle all U.S. military bases in South Viet Nam.

3. The internal affairs of Viet Nam must be settled by the South Viet Nam people themselves in accordance with the South Viet Nam NFL Political Programme, without foreign interference.

4. The reunification of Viet Nam must be settled by the populations of the two zones North and South, free from outside intervention.

*

AT his Jan. 27 press conference, U.S. President Richard Nixon spoke of "new" things in connection with his Viet Nam policy and he mentioned among others "a new sense of urgency with regard to the negotiations" and "new tactics".

But the proposals made in Paris by his representative H. Cabot Lodge seem to give a flat denial to his own statement. Indeed, was there any need to wait till there as a "new" President at the White House and a "new" team of negotiators at Paris Kleber Street, for the American side to take up such matters as "the restoration of the DMZ to its original Status"?

Didn't the so-called new U.S. proposal which was but a distortion of historical facts, draw its substance from a very old document concocted in January 1966 by Mr. Johnson and Mr. Rusk and known as the "fourteen points of the White House," where can be found the official wording of the U.S. theory which reverses the respective roles of the aggressor (U.S. imperialism) and the victim of aggression (the Vietnamese people)? And hadn't Mr. Cabot Lodge's suggestion itself, under the form it was submitted to the Paris Conference, been put forward again and again by Mr. Harriman and rejected each time by Mr. Xuan Thuy at the May-November 1968 DRVN-USA offical talks?

One wonders what Washington's purpose was, in reiterating it, if not to put a spanner in the wheel of the quadripartite Conference, so true is it that U.S. negotiators are past masters in dilatory tactics. If such is the case, they must bear full responsibility for the consequences of their behaviour.

Flowers and Crackers

(Continued from page 1)

than that tremendous upsurge in the towns and cities of South Viet Nam in the spring of 1968, an irresistible onslaught which took away from Johnson his last chances and illusions?

Ever since then every passing day has been bringing news of more victories. More than ever, the Saigon puppets and their masters shake with fear when Tết comes near. Anguish gnaws at their hearts not only at Tết, but every day and night. The ground is giving way under their feet, and for them the oncoming Tết and spring are but sombre omens. If it were in their power to do so, they would forbid flowers to blossom: those magnificent peach flowers which bloom when Tết draws near give them a cold sweat. But vainly will they try to drown the sound of Tết crackers with bombs from their B.52s and to kill spring flowers with their toxic chemicals. It is beyond their power to prevent the rebirth of nature and stop the Vietnamese people from enjoying Tết and undertaking to their friends the world over to advance towards more victorious springs.

North Viet Nam

U.S. Acts of War in January

ACCORDING to a communiqué issued by the Commission for Investigation of the U.S. Imperialists' War Crimes in Viet Nam, in January, the Americans continued encroaching upon the sovereignty and threatening the security of the DRVN, thus committing new crimes against the Vietnamese people.

The Communiqué reveals that reconnaissance aircraft of the SR.71, F4, F100, OV 10A, L.19 and other types flew 450 spy missions in all over North Viet Nam. In particular, the airspace of Hanoi was violated 7 times and that of Haiphong, 10 times.

On 7 days, Jan.1, 9, 10, 12, 14, 19, and 21, US aircraft fired smoke shells on the area North of Hien Luong Bridge, that of Cua Tung and the villages of Vinh Quang and Vinh Giang in the Vinh Linh area. Furthermore, on Jan. 12, 18, 19 and 24, U.S. aircraft also pumped rockets and 20mm cannon shells into 5 places of Vinh Giang and Huong Loc villages.

During the month, the communiqué continues, the U.S. also bombarded many areas of North Viet Nam with long-range artillery based South of the DMZ or on 7th Fleet ships and with aircraft of different types, including B52 strategic bombers. The villages of Vinh Son, Vinh Truong, Vinh Giang and Vinh Thuy were hit by nearly 200 175-mm and 406-mm from guns of the battleship *new Jersey* on Jan 1, 12, 13, 14, 17, 22, 23, 28, and 29.

In **Nghe An**, on Jan. 25, 1969, just at a moment when the First Plenary session of the Paris quadripartite Conference was taking place, 8 U.S. aircraft of the A4 and A7 types dropped 23 explosive bombs and launched 2 rockets on the villages of Nghi Trueng, Nghi Quang and Nghi Phong, killing or wounding 18 people (including 11 children), destroying 16 houses, destroying 3 hectares of food crops and completely burning a tea plantation. The Nghi Quang dam area was hit by 8 explosive bombs.

In **Ha Tinh**, U.S. planes flew 7 raids on the villages of Son Kim and Son Tay (Huong Son district) and Ky Xuan (Ky Anh district) and on the Huong Son timber development centre (Huong Son district). On Jan.29, at about 13 hours, three F4 and an OV. 10A released 18 explosive bombs on Huong Son district and fired several rounds of rockets, destroying many trees and crops.

In **Quang Binh**, operating 24 sorties in 8 flights, B 52's on Jan. 23, 24 and 26 dumpped 720 tons of bombs on many populated areas of Bo Trach district, killing or wounding 6 people working in the fields and causing serious material damage.

The Communiqué concludes:

"According to an AP dispatch on Jan.30, 1969, U.S. military sources disclosed that B. 52's had bombed communist supply routes North of the 17th parallel. This disclosure gave the lie to all equivocations of the U.S. Defence Department which asserted in an ambiguous fashion that there was no question of the air bombing of North Viet Nam being resumed"

PREPARATIONS FOR TENTH TET TREE-PLANTING FESTIVAL IN FULL SWING

THESE days, throughout the length and breadth of the DRVN, from the Viet Nam-China border to the 17th parallel and from the upland region to the delta plains, people have been making active preparations for the 10th tree-planting festival on the occasion of Tet 1969. Nurseries in various localities as well those run by agricultural co-ops, forest developments centres and State farms already have at hand tens of millions of saplings for this year's afforestation campaign.

The tree-planting festival, initiated in 1959 by President Ho Chi Minh, has been ever since established as a custom widely observed in North Viet Nam. At each Tet (Lunar New Year) young and old people enthusiastically take part in the tree-planting drive, inaugurating the afforestation programme for the whole year. U.S. air and naval attacks did not the least slow down the afforestation rate. On the contrary, during the resistance to the U.S. war of destruction, fully aware of the advantages of afforestation in both the economic and military fields, our compatriots gave a strong impetus to the movement. Compared with 1960, the number of trees planted increased 4-fold in 1965 and 6 fold in 1967.

The same measure has made it possible for Do Luong co-op, Lang Son province, to change more than 100 hectares of waste land into high-yield ricefields, thus trebling the co-op's income within 2 years.

Apart from protection provided for the crops against too strong winds, trees planted along village lanes, on the boundaries of ricefields and on the banks of waterways have been supplying the people with an appreciable quantity of building material and firewood.

In many provinces, tree planting has become a branch of agricultural economy. Most agricultural co-ops in the provinces of Vinh Phu, Hai Hung and Ha Bac have their teams specializing in the new trade. There are now more than 10,000 tree-planting teams in various co-ops. Besides, more than 22,000 skilled workers and technicians have been trained for this job. New fruit trees — litchi, orange, lemon, dragon-eye, apple, coconut, etc..., nowadays fill the orchards of co-ops. Those planted during the first years of the movement have already bore fruit.

Old folks have actively contributed to the movement. Many of them have achieved brilliant feats in this field. Let us mention among others old Nguyen Van Tan, of Vinh Phu province, who has won the the title of Labour Hero conferred on him by the National Assembly, and Nguyen Van Quang, 74, of Ninh Binh province, who has for 7 years running led a tree-planting team of his co-op and who has, by himself, planted more than 300,000 trees of different kinds.

VILLAGE L.T. (QUANG BINH PROVINCE) SHOWS IRREPRESSIBLE VITALITY

PARTY COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP — A DECISIVE FACTOR

"The easiest thing can't be done without the people's countenance. The hardest task is only child's play with the people's help."

This saying familiar with the people of Quang Binh province has been given a vivid illustration in village LT, Le Thuy district. In fact, today looking at the bustling activity and the lines of luxuriant trees crisscrossing the village, few people believe that LT has been the target of 412 U.S. raids.

When the U.S. aggressors first bombed and strafed the village, the people did meet with some difficulties in their everyday life. Fully conscious of its responsibility, the village Party Committee took prompt actions in ideological education and organization and generated a new spirit in production and the fighting. It saw to it that everybody thoroughly grasped the axiom President Ho Chi Minh had clearly laid down, namely, that "nothing is more precious than independence and freedom," upheld the spirit of the determination to fight and to win and enhanced the tradition of mutual affection and assistance.

Throughout the years 1965 and 1966, it staged many drives of political discussions including those of President Ho Chi Minh's appeal for resistance to U.S. aggression for national salvation and of the Government policy towards the victims of war. It launched a movement to learn from village N.T. the way it organized civil defence and the settlement of war casualties, from village C.T. its management of production and combat, and from village D.P. its handling of manpower.

Since then, the fighting and production at L.T. has made visible progress.

MUTUAL ASSISTANCE

After an enemy raid, Mrs. Ngom volunteered to share with victims her food and clothing. The Party Committee took her as an example then held discussions among party members and the people on how to care for, and assist, the people hit by the raids. There has been a rule that if the number of stricken households does not surpass 10, the co-op will look after them; if the number is more than 10, nearby co-ops will join forces to do it, and if the number is far greater, the work will be tackled by the whole village.

Mrs. Ho, a member of the X.H. co-op, had her intestine perforated by steel pellets. She had little chance to survive her wounds. The Party cell called an emergency meeting. 106 of the 174 members of the Party and the Labour Youth Union offered to donate blood. Under the enemy bombing, a number of them crossed the river to the hospital for this purpose. Mrs Ho was saved. The Party Committee commended the donators and used their deed to further ideological work among the masses.

Le Doi was wounded in his backbone, his mother had a broken arm, his wife a broken leg and one of his children was killed. While he, his wife and his mother were in hospital, the co-op minded his three little children. When all three left the hospital, the co-op and the villagers supplied them with food and and fruit to feed them up. The district authorities gave his mother — the mother of combatants who died for the Fatherland—financial aid. When he and his wife were well again, the co-op provided them with suitable jobs: he got that of care-taker of the wood-work shop and his wife was admitted to the tailoring team. 22 children in the village were orphaned by U.S. bombing. Eleven of them were put in charge of the State and the remainder who reached school age were receiving schooling paid for by the villagers.

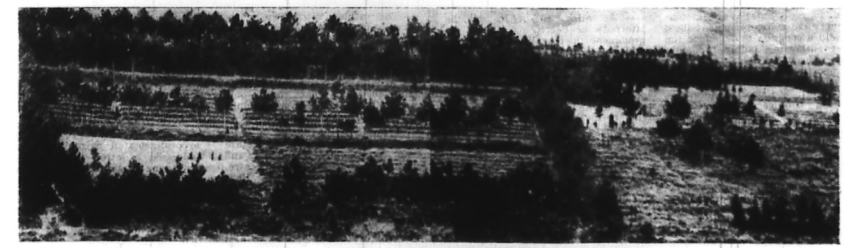
Village L.T. set up a special team and assigned it the task to get timber, bamboo, elephant grass in the forests for the rebuilding of houses and shelters for the war victims. So far, the village has put in tens of thousands of workdays and spent tens of thousands of "dongs" on material for this purpose. Aid given by the villagers to the war victims has already amounted to dozens of tons of food and hundreds of sets of clothes plus a big sum of money.

PROGRESS IN ALL RESPECTS.

After 4 years of fighting against the U.S. war of destruction, the co-ops in village LT have been firmly consolidated. 100 per cent of the peasant households have joined the co-ops. In 1964 summer rice yield was 1.3 tons per hectare. The figure rose to 2.35 tons in 1968. In 1968 the village obtained 4.5 tons of paddy per annum (2 crops) as against 3.9 tons in 1965 (as against only 1.3 tons under the colonialists and feudalists.)

The yield grew from 3 tons 1964 to 4 tons in 1968 for potatoes and from 1.6 tons to 2.1 tons for maize — the acreage under rice and subsidiary crops increased by 30 per cent compared with the previous years. The village militia is credited with shooting down 2 U.S. aircraft. Children go to school regularly. The village primary and elementary schools have been cited wanguard schools for three years running. Songs are heard everywhere in the village, drowning bomb and shell explosions. The village has a dance and song troupe and each co-op has its own. In 1968, village L.T. won a prize of the Ministry of Culture for its splendid cultural activities in wartime.

The DRVN National Assembly and President Ho Chi Minh have awarded this village two Military Exploit orders and a Labour order. The Party Committe of Quang Binh province has conferred on the Party Committee of village LT the title of "Steel Party committe."



Responding to President Ho Chi Minh's call, Loc Binh district (Lang Son province) people have turned bare hills into forests.

ON U.S. STERILE SEARCH FOR "POSITION OF STRENGTH"

by Chien Binh

Editor's Note: *We publish below excerpts from an article by well-known commentator Chien Binh, which first appeared in* Quan Doi Nhan Dan *(People's Army), under the heading "The search for a position of strength" from a position of weakness will only bring complete failure on the U.S. Sub-heads are ours.*

Failure of "limited warfare"

EXACTLY a year has passed since the South Viet Nam people and armed forces, under the glorious banner of the NFL, launched their resounding general offensives and widespread uprisings. Their *tremendous successes have forced on U.S. imperialism an overall review of "limited warfare."*

U.S. "limited warfare" strategy sprung from the ashes of its "special warfare". U.S. strategic objective was to wipe out the PLAF main force units, place the people under its control and in its grip and encircle and isolate the revolution in the South. U.S. strategic purpose since the commitment en masse of expeditionary troops to South Viet Nam was to recover the initiative on the battlefield. U.S. strategic guide-line was offensive, prompt actions and prompt victory. U.S. strategic methods were the launching of counter-offensives all over the South Vietnamese theatre of operations coupled with destructive air raids on the North. American rulers were dead certain that with the U.S. Expeditionary Corps as the core, they would secure a military decision in their favour.

But, as Henry Kissinger, the new White House adviser on National Security admitted it, "the Tet offensive overthrew the assumptions of American strategy".

After three years of relentless efforts reaching an alltime high, the U.S. was completely thwarted in its attempts to destroy the PLAF, "pacify" the countryside and defend the cities, and encircle and isolate South Vietnam's revolution. The bankruptcy of US military strategy was so total that it could no longer be saved by "re-adjusting" some of its objectives or resorting to some complementary methods and pouring in some more troops. The situation on the battlefields has forced important US decisions: not only had they to envisage the change of their military strategy but also to consider the search for a political way out of their lost war. From the offensive they had to shift squarely onto the defensive; from "search-and destroy" operations with a view to wiping out adverse forces, they had to switch to "clear-and-hold" actions, aimed at keeping down their own casualties; from spreading their troops to "pacify" immense rural areas they had to revert to the protection and "pacification" of the very cities; from escalation in raids on North Viet Nam so as to encircle and isolate the revolution in the South, they had to cut completely and unconditionaly all bombardments against the North.

They were forced to dismiss Westmoreland, the C-in-C of U.S. forces in Viet Nam, who still continued to advocate the so-called "dynamic strategy". They were reduced to halting the reinforcement of the Expeditionary Corps and to reject a proposed patching-up of the collapsing "limited warfare" strategy. After the "limited bombing" of North Viet Nam, they had finally to cease all aerial, naval and artillery operations.

The *Guardian* commented that the present strategic line of the U.S. in South Viet Nam was essentially one paving the way for negotiations and U.S. troop withdrawal. It is not the proouct of some temporary puzzled and panicky frame of mind but inevitable outcome of the all too apparent losing posture of the US.

Although the US changed its military strategy in the hope of averting a further worsening of its situation, the facts in the battlefields during the past year showed that the new U.S. "clear-and hold" strategy failed right from the beginning of its application. The U.S.-puppet strength has undoubtedly sunk to an irremediable low.

Re-examination of U.S. neo-colonialist policy

FORCED to make a re-appraisal of, and to reverse, its military strategy at a time when it was sustaining heavy setbacks and found itself in a state of passiveness and unpreparedness, the U.S. feels the bitterer as *it has to re-examine its whole neo-colonialist policy, under the impact of the great successes of the South Viet Nam people and armed forces.*

H. Kissinger acknowledged that the Tet offensive was a political defeat for Saigon and the United States and that one of its result "was to delay—perhaps indefinitely—the consolidation of (Saigon puppets') governmental authority".

The ultimate aim of the Americans in their "limited war" of aggression in South Viet Nam is none other than the setting up of a stable machinery of puppet government which would permit them to bring to fruition their neo-colonialist schemes. But the general offensives and widespread uprisings last year dealt a deadly blow at the Saigon administration and drove them to the verge of total destruction. Faced with a hopeless situation, the U.S. had to reconsider a series of crucial problems: What were the real capabilities of the puppet apparatus? What should be U.S. view and attitude regarding the National Front for Liberation? How deep should the U.S. be involved in Viet Nam? What should be the limits to U.S. commitments? In other words, the U.S. had to make a thorough overhaul of its whole neo-colonialist policy in South Viet Nam.

Instead of the massive deployment of U.S. soldiers there until recently, instead of giving as usual its field commander a "blank cheque" as regards money and troop strength, and of the oft-mentioned commitment "to stay there indefinitely", it now speaks of "limited commitments and "de-Americanization" as steps to get out of the quagmire of an already lost war of aggression. If militarily the U.S. has no other choice than a strategy paving the way for negotiations and troop withdrawal, politically it has only to reconcile itself to a major backing-down move in its neo-colonialist policy. Whereas formerly it truculently clamoured that it was out to destroy South Viet Nam's revolutionary forces, demanded that "the Viet Cong lay down their arms and surrender" and denied any role to the NFL, now it is compelled to sit down and talk with the NFL and seek a political solution to the South Viet Nam problem. Is this not an unmistakable acknowledgement of an important change in the balance of forces? Indeed the revolutionary forces of South Viet Nam, whose organizer and leader is the NFL, have considerably grown up, while the U.S.-fostered Saigon administration has drastically weakened. Though fully aware that negotiations with the NFL would inevitably alarmingly undermine the position of the Saigon puppets whom it had been so painstakingly trying to vamp up, the U.S. finally had to opt for such a course of action against its own will, as a result of its losing posture. It is a public avowal that it is no longer able to use military means to attain the political objectives of its war of agression and that its neo-colonialism in Viet Nam is irremediably doomed.

Re-appraisal of U.S. counter-revolutionary global strategy

ON the other hand, *the Vietnamese people's highly effective resistance coupled with the widespread struggle of the world's peoples have forced the U.S. to re-consider its counter-revolutionary global strategy.*

Viet Nam is the spearhead of the struggle waged by world revolutionary forces in their offensive posture. Viet Nam is also an important link in the chain of U.S counter-revolutionary global strategy. In Viet Nam, a bitter conflict is taking place between the most revolutionary and the most reactionary forces in the world at present. The struggle for the conquest and safeguard of national independence is being carried out there at its highest level against the most reactionary and brutal brand of neo-colonialism. South Viet Nam has become the first—and most typical—testing ground for the U.S. strategy of "flexible response". The U.S. has mustered against her a considerable part of its strength and "responded" with a punch surpassing by far that envisaged by American theorists. It has successively unleashed a "special war" in South Viet Nam then a "limited war" complemented by a war of destruction with air force and navy against the North, in the hope of checking Vietnamese people's national liberation movement.

Viet Nam's tremendously successful resistance has inflicted a telling blow on the U.S. "flexible response" strategy and laid bare all its inconsistencies and weaknesses. The U.S. has been landed into an unguarded position all over the world, and assailed by many difficulties both at home and abroad.

U.S. ruling circles were alarmed by a survey conducted by a number of American congressmen on the stationing of U.S. troops in 21 countries. They reported that the riches and strength of the U.S were spread too thin and would not be able to cope with such eventualities as had occurred in Viet Nam, should they repeat themselves in other places. They also held the view that the requirements of the Viet Nam war had reduced U.S. military strength to a new low at a time when danger was increasing.

U.S. credit in the capitalist world is on the downgrade. Its position as a superpower is shaking. The fabric of its society is torn by dissensions and violence and columnist Walter Lippmann admitted that never had the United States met with so many difficulties in Europe and Latin American, in the Middle East and South East Asia as now. Owing to its Viet Nam failures and worldwide troubles the U.S. had to re-appraise its counter-revolutionary global strategy. Reversely, world-wide difficulties and troubles back home have called for a review by the U.S. rulers of their strategy and methods in their war of aggression in Viet Nam. After so many setbacks there, they quarrelled among themselves and asked questions: Where do U.S. really vital interests lie? Where should the U.S. focus its priority efforts and to what extent? What are the limits to U.S. strength? What are the capabilities of the U.S. in implementing its global strategy? What measure of "response" the U.S. should and is able to give? How far and in what conditions can the U.S. play its role as an international gendarme?

The Viet Nam war has brought to light the weaknesses, limits and lack of efficiency of U.S. material strength. The practical lesson it should draw is that there is a world of difference between its actual strength and what it claimed to be an "unimaginable strength". In his first article written for the press after his retirement, Lyndon B. Johnson admitted with bitterness that U.S. strength or wealth had not been able to bend world events to its will. Richard Nixon, in an article in *Foreign Affairs*, also wrote that as a result of Viet Nam, it is almost certain that the U.S. will from now on be quite reluctant to get involved in similar intervention on a similar basis. Maxwell Taylor, the protagonist of the "flexible response" strategy, mentioned, as a first of a series of lessons learned from the Viet Nam war, the need to re-examine all U.S. commitments throughout the world. And most recently, U.S. rulers affirmed that they took only "selected" and "limited commitments". This is a clear admission of the decline and a climb-down of the top-most imperialists, chieftains of all neo-colonialists.

U.S. obduracy only leads to bitterer setbacks

It is beyond doubt that the U.S. is doomed to failure and that victory belongs to the Vietnamese people. This hard fact has now been accepted even by the most die-hard and bellicose U.S. aggressors. They are seeking ways to extricate themselves from a war they are losing. But at the same time they are still very obdurate and crafty. Though trying to withdraw as rapidly as possible from this "very difficult war", R. Nixon still insists on an "honourable settlement" and negotiations from a position of strength.

An all-woman airtrillery unit, in Quang Binh Province

On the military plane, the U.S. imperialists are actively implementing their very brutal "clear-and-hold" strategy, abstaining from extensively deploying their forces so as to cut down casualties, defend the cities, military bases and communication axes and occupy a number of densely populated areas. They are putting into effect their "accelerated pacification" programme with a view to widening the control of the puppets; they are beating up recruits and are providing new equipment to the puppet army in the hope of revitalizing it. They keep up their spy flights on North Viet Nam and even indulge in provocations and threats. In the meantime, efforts are being exerted by them to reinforce both American and puppet armed forces for further military adventures.

In the political field, they are doing their utmost to consolidate the puppets' machinery, to create some kind of political basis for the Saigon administration. They are also stepping up fascist measures to weaken the revolutionary forces in the South.

In diplomacy, they are striving to induce public opinion into believing that they are seeking in good faith a settlement of the Viet Nam question by political means, whereas they are sticking obstinately to their position as aggressors and persisting in their obvious attempts to shirk the fundamental problem, separating the political and the military aspects of the Viet Nam issue and repeating absurd allegations to drag out the Paris Conference. The cloven foot of the U.S. rulers has been let out by H. Kissinger when he said there should be "a sufficiently long period so that a genuinely indigenous political process can have a chance to become established". The whole of U.S. military, political and diplomatic designs is to create a position of strength with a viable puppet administration as the mainstay. Obviously learning no lesson from its defeats, the U.S. is still plotting to preserve its neo-colonialist interests in South Viet Nam as long as possible.

But the setbacks suffered in the Viet Nam war are not ones inflicted on Johnson personally, they are failures of decaying US imperialism. Its weaknesses in the Viet Nam war are not temporary, they are the aggregate outcome of U.S. defeats on the battlefields, as well as of U.S. compounded political, military, economic and social difficulties, both at home and abroad. Johnson had three years to carry out his "limited war" of aggression; he had mobilized U.S. military forces on a very large scale, he had made use of all capabilities and talents the U.S. was possessed of; he had resorted to all atrocious military means and all cunning political and diplomatic moves the U.S. ruling monopoly capitalists had in store; yet, in the end, he had not been able to achieve a position of strength and on the contrary had lapsed into a position of weakness and was heading for evident failure. R. Nixon, who only recently acceded to power can resort to new military, political and diplomatic tricks, but he cannot get out of the sweeping predicament of U.S. imperialism, and cannot deny the fact that the U.S. is already outwitted in Viet Nam and basic factors of such a reverse cannot be altered. Two years ago, Maxwell Taylor reluctantly arrived at this conclusion: in the Viet Nam war, the U.S. had committed a triple mistake: it had chosen a wrong opponent, a wrong time and a wrong place. More recently, H. Kissinger drew a bigger lesson: the U.S. had used also wrong strategic means. Four main mistakes committed in an unjust war make the complete fiasco of the US neo-colonialist undertaking a foregone conclusion and however talented R. Nixon may be, he is unable to alter the course of history.

The gist of the U.S. search for a position of strength is, in the end, the constitution of a strong puppet administration. For the last 14 years, no stone has been left unturned by the Americans to consolidate it. But the more efforts exerted by them, the weaker their valets. This has the been greatest and most outstanding of all weaknesses of the U.S. in its war of aggression. At present, it cannot, turn this foible into a forte within a short time, as the American Expeditionary Corps is war-weary and impotent, the puppet army is disintegrating by big chunks, and the revolutionary forces in the South are impetuously forging ahead and securing an overwhelmingly better position.

As their attempts to attain neo-colonialist objectives by military means have come to a complete flop, the U.S. imperialists are now trying a political solution. R. Nixon wants to use this to salvage what he can, so as to cut the losses on the battlefield. But such a calculation is sheer wishful thinking.

What is most important and decisive is that no matter what subterfuge will be employed by R.Nixon, our people's resolve and will to fight on will remain unshakable and the revolutionary forces in the South will keep on growing, with their offensives and uprisings daily gaining in impetuosity.

The heroic, persevering and successful struggle of the Vietnamese people, the actions of the world peopies and those of the American people are applying a threefold pressure with an aggregate strength fully capable of overpowering the inertia of the U.S. imperialists.

The more stubborn they are in prolonging the war to avert defeat, the bitterer their failure. This is the inescapable logic of events.

SAIGON SEETHES WITH UNREST AS TET IS NEARING

LABOUR ACTIONS

3,000 workers at the (South Viet Nam) Air Company gathered in front of the office of the Confederation of Workers at 1 p.m. Feb. 1st to reiterate their claim for year-end bonus, *GPA* reported.

The action was taken after the company bosses showed reluctancy to keep their promise to meet the demand which had been raised earlier. The workers decided to persist until they got their way.

The agency reported that earlier, on Jan. 30, representatives of the confectionery and pastry branch in Saigon had held a congress to denounce the puppet authorities' failure to supply them with enough sugar and flour and importing of too large quantities of foreign sweets and cakes instead. As a result, too sweets and cakes-producing families had been hard pressed.

A petition passed at the congress called for edequate supplies of sugar and flour by the puppet authorities and a halt in imports of foreign sweets and cakes.

— On Jan.29, the Small Traders' Union also lodged an urgent petition urging the Saigon puppet administration to reduce income tax and exempt them from book registration as they were facing difficulties in trade activity including shortage of goods, and were therefore unable to pay taxes.

The Union also insisted that the puppet administration repair markets and sale-stands, as all the markets in the 9 city districts lacked space and sanitation.

PEACE MOVEMENT

— According to *AFP*, on the afternoon of Feb.2, 1969 about 100 prominent personalities, intellectuals, religious priests and high-ranking officials of the Saigon puppet administration, including a number of "senators", "representatives" and "ex-ministers", attended a sit-in at An Quang pagoda for an end to the war and restoration of peace.

An "ex-minister" of the Saigon regime publicly declared at the closing of the sit-in, "We must not sit waiting for peace to be granted, we must instead fight for it."

Since the beginning of November last year, various circles in Saigon have successively held hundreds of sit-ins, some with 1,000 participants, at An Quang pagoda and many other places in the city for the restoration of peace, removal of the Thieu-Ky-Huong triumvirate, formation of a peace cabinet and serious talks with the NFL. The sit-ins at An Quang pagoda in particular were attended by well-known figures in Saigon, among them many university professors and a major general of the puppet army.

— The ruthless crackdown by the Thieu-Ky-Huong clique on popular actions for the restoration of peace and an end to the war has aroused great discontent among Saigon religious leaders (On Feb. 6, at a press conference Nguyen Van Thieu again declared that he would "crush" any Catholic or Buddhist priest supporting a "pro-communist" peace).

On Jan. 24, during a lecture given to Buddhist students and followers at Quang Duc Centre, Cong Ly Street (Saigon), a Buddhist Superior in the leading circles denounced the Saigon puppet administration for having banned Buddhists' observance of Buddha's Enlightenment Day. He also condemned the U.S. aggressors for having brought death and mourning to the Vietnamese people.

After pointing out that since 1954, the Saigon administration which has caused the deaths of millions of people, the Buddisht Superior stressed, "Today, everyone of us desires peace".

— Earlier on Jan. 23, at the Redemptorists' Cathedral, a priest plainly said that "everybody wants peace" and condemned the "warmongers for having led the Vietnamese people into an abyss as Hitler did in the past."

"The citizen," he said, "has the right to raise his voice when his suffering has reached its climax, and that is his most legitimate patriotic right".

— According to AFP, on Feb. 6, 20 professors of Saigon University addressed a letter to the Thieu-Ky-Huong administration in protest against the arrest and persecution of students struggling for peace.

In the letter, these professors forcefully condemned the administration's reactionary policy and warned that its fascist acts would lead to damaging reaction.

— On Jan. 4, *Tin Sang* (Morning News) and many other Saigon papers revealed that students had sent for publication in the press many letters and communiques protesting against the arrest of students by the puppet administration following the peace demonstration on Christmas eve.

The protest letter from Law students denounced "the present administration for having constantly fomented an atmosphere of insecurity and fear among the students" and "schemed to terrorize" students.

The communique of the Science students pointed out, "Any trial and verdict against peace-loving nationalists, especially the youth, students and school-pupils, at present must be regarded as an act running counter to every effort towards the settlement of the war and the will for peace of the entire Vietnamese people".

The said protest etters and communiques firmly demanded that the Thieu-Ky-Huong triumvirate stop at once the repression of students and called on Saigon people to support the latter's struggle".

— Finally, *Los Angeles Times* in its Feb. 3 issue disclosed that 40 "senators" and 61 "deputies" in Saigon (roughly half the total number of M.P's) had sent a petition to Nguyen Van Thieu to demand that the press regime be "liberalized" and the decisions on the suspension or closing down of 15 dailies and periodicals be cancelled.

FRENCH PEOPLE SUPPORT
to Viet Nam's Anti-US Resistance

At the Paris Conference, the delegations of the DRVN and of the South Viet Nam NFL sincerely thanked President de Gaulle and the French Government for the facilities for the holding of the conference and the friendly welcome extended to both Vietnamese delegations. They expressed their heartfelt appreciation of the French working class and people's constant and strong support for the just struggle of the Vietnamese people in North and South Viet Nam against U.S. aggression.

The active sympathy of the progressive and peace-loving people of France has been displayed in a multiform struggle which has been increasing in scale and in depth.

U.S. WAR "ESCALATION" IN VIET NAM HAS BEEN MATCHED BY "ESCALATION" OF THE FRENCH PEOPLE'S AID TO THE VIETNAMESE.

WALDECK Rochet, Secretary General of the French Communist Party, Benoit Frachon, Secretary General of the French General Confederation of Labour, and other leaders of the French Peace Movement and progressive organizations have repeatedly affirmed that support for the struggle of the Vietnamese people against U.S. aggression is an internationalist duty, an honour, a pride and an urgent call of conscience to all those who are against aggressive imperialism, cruelty and injustice. It is with the same spirit that the French working class, intellectuals, young people, students and peace combatants have been carrying their active struggle.

In 1968, several important national and international conferences were held in France to support the Vietnamese people and denounce U.S. crimes. The "Meeting of French Intellectuals Supporting Viet Nam" (Versailles, March 23, 1968) was marked by the unforgettable words of great painter Pablo Picasso: "All for Viet Nam", "All modern art is with Viet Nam" and of Catholic writer François Mauriac: "The mankind of to-morrow owes much to the Viet Nam of to-day, it will never forget it." The Grenoble World Conference of Lawyers for Viet Nam (July 1968) with the participation of 150 delegates from 40 countries strongly condemned U.S. crimes of aggression and genocide in Viet Nam. Philosopher Jean Paul Sartre, Chairman of the Bertrand Russell International Tribunal, expressed his sympathy for the Vietnamese people as follows: "In the eyes of those men, women and children whom the most powerful nation on earth world has been trying to bring to their knees through the most criminal means, I see neither fear, nor discouragement, but most often anger, and always determination, not a wild, but a reasonable one, I would say wholly natural".

French personalities paid visits to Viet Nam while millions of tons of U.S. bombs were raining on it, its woods and rice-fields withered under the action of U.S. chemicals and its roads pockmarked with U.S. explosive and steelpellet bombs. Defying dangers and difficulties, they had but one concern: how to accurately inform progressive mankind of every exploit of the Vietnamese people in combat and production and of every U.S. monstrous crime. The Vietnamese people recall their names with love and gratitude: the FCP delegation headed by Jacques Duclos, the delegation of the French Peace Movement, journalist Madeleine Riffaud, filmmaker Roger Pic, critic Jean Bertolino, professor Laurent Schwartz, lawyer Leo Matarasso, astronomer Henri Van Regemorter...

A leader of the FCP was right when he declared at Le Havre as the Soviet cargoboat "Solnechnogorsk" left this port with gifts from the French people to the Vietnamese people: "U.S. war "escalation" in Viet Nam has been matched by "escalation" of the French people's aid to the Vietnamese people".

The nation-wide collection of "1,000 million (old) francs" has been followed by other campaigns: "A ship load for Viet Nam", "A million books for Viet Nam", "A hospital for Viet Nam" etc. French women collected dresses, cloth, sugar, milk and equipments for nurseries, they knit sweaters for Vietnamese combatants. Some gave even their wedding presents. At Beaucaire, a woman gathered within a week 7,000 francs, 23 kilogrammes of sugar, 34 kilogrammes of milk and a lot of household articles for the "Viet Nam ship". On May 1, 1968, nosegays of lilies of the valley with knots bearing the NFL colours were sold by Vietnamese residents in a fund-raising campaign: the words: "For Viet Nam" won every heart and opened every purse and Parisians willingly paid 50 francs for flowers 4 francs worth.

On January 23, 1969, the National Committee of Action for the Support and Victory of the Vietnamese People issued a communique calling on the French people to respond to a drive to support the struggle of the Vietnamese people at its present stage. It put out a programme of action lasting until the end of March 1969 with the following points:

— to collect 100 million old francs.

— to organize mass rallies in 8 places to demand that the Americans immediately put an end to the war of aggression in Viet Nam.

— to increase the circulation of the daily "With Viet Nam" to keep the French people abreast with the situation in Viet Nam.

The French Peace Movement has also launched extensive actions in towns and provinces. In Lyon, Toulouse, Tours, Marseilles, Nantes..., the U.S. war of aggression was condemned in many meetings. In Paris, over 500 intellectuals on January 24, 1969 staged a moving ceremony commemorating the death of Dr. Pham Ngoc Thach, DRVN Health Minister, who had given his life to the cause of the resistance against U.S. aggression.

Rousing welcome accorded to Mr. Tran Buu Kiem, Head of the NFL Delegation, by Vietnamese residents and Parisians at Le Bourget Airport on Dec. 16, 1968

"We are behind the DRVN and the NFL at the Paris Conference on Viet Nam".

As early as April 1968, as Paris was mentioned among other cities as a possible site for the Conference on Viet Nam the progressive French people already looked forward to welcoming the victors from Viet Nam. No wonder that the delegations of the DRVN and of the FNL were warmly received at Le Bourget with so many flags, flowers and streamers. Jacqueline Gelly, Secretary General of the French Women's Union, stated that French women had a "double honour" when receiving Madame Nguyen Thi Binh. In the streets, pedestrians wavered their hands to greet cars carrying DRVN delegates. The mass movements used such slogans as: "Viet Nam will win", "The NFL is the genuine representative of the South Vietnamese people", "We are for the DRVN and the NFL", "U.S. imperialism must quit South Viet Nam"...

In Paris, the delegations of the DRVN and of the NFL have received thousands of resolutions and letters from various strata of the French people expressing great admiration for the Vietnamese people and strong support for the sound position of the two delegations. Mr. Legop from Bagne wrote: "The fate of mankind is in your hands... Have confidence in us for we have confidence in you". Mr. Gobelin from Nice, and his family, stressed: "We pledge ourselves to uphold the just cause of the Vietnamese people until complete U.S. defeat. Allow us to express our gratitude to each Vietnamese in the South as well in the North — who is struggling in his combat post for the country's independence and freedom and for man a with a new stature".

The French Peace Movement recently launched a large-scale and uninterrupted action. Meetings were organized at which resolutions firmly insisted that the U.S. administration put an end to the war of aggression in Viet Nam and let the Vietnamese people settle their own affairs. On January 20, 1969, the day of Nixon's inauguration at the White House, a meeting for the Franco-Vietnamese Friendship and Solidarity took place in Marseilles with an attendance of over eight hundred people.

A new initiative was taken by the French Peace movement when it organized in France conferences to support Viet Nam in cooperation with the Peace Movements of other countries. On September 29, 1968, an International Day of Solidarity between the British, French and Vietnamese peoples was held at Boulogne in presence of Ambassador Ha Van Lau, Deputy head of the Delegation of the DRVN Government to the Paris Conference. In January 1969, the French-West German meeting in Strasbourg and the Meeting of Vietnamese, French, Belgian and West German representatives in Aulnoye also yielded excellent results.

SIDE by side with other progressive peoples in the world, the French people are holding aloft in Western Europe the banner of struggle for the just cause of Viet Nam. The Vietnamese people in both zones warmly thank them for their priceless support which is an inexhaustible source of encouragement to their struggle for independence, freedom and national reunification and for peace and security all over the world.

A shock youth team carrying war wounded to the nearest medical post

IN SOUTH VIET NAM LIBERATED ZONE

PROGRESS OF EDUCATION IN TRUNG BO (Ex-Annam)

— Quang Da province holds a particularly important place in US-puppet "clear-and-hold" plans. Yet in its Duy Xuyen, Dien Ban and Dai Loc districts which are the hardest hit, schools keep on functioning. Village X (Duy Xuyen district) alone has 300 pupils.

— Hoai Nhon, Phu My, Hoai An and Tuy Phuoc districts of Binh Dinh province, have rapidly re-opened their classes which had to close down as a result of enemy "sweeps". 6,000 pupils are daily attending schools in the two districts of Hoai Nhon and Phu My.

— According to still incomplete figures, the total school enrolment in Quang Ngai province in the 1968-1969 academic year is 15,350 pupils. There are in the province 4 secondary schools. Village C. of Binh Son district counts 1,250 pupils of primary and secondary schools, and 500 grown-ups are attending complementary education classes, which means one-third of the local population goes to school. In 1968, two villages of the same district wiped out illiteracy.

— Kontum province has opened 417 complementary education classes for 3,600 grown-ups. 17 ethnical minorities have had their own script.

Week of solidarity with the Guatemalan people

Guatemala's Anti-US-Puppet Fight Makes Headway

GUATEMALA is now "hot spot" in Latin America for the U.S. imperialists. The political struggle of workers, peasants, students and intellectuals is mounting there while the armed struggle against the U.S. and its henchmen is making headway. What is important is that the revolutionary forces of various tendencies have come to this conclusion: revolutionary armed struggle is the course dictated by the laws of social development in Guatemala.

The U.S. imperialits working hands in gloves with the local reactionaries have been ruthlessly exploiting the Guatemalan people and turning Guatemala into a base against Cuba and other countries in Latin America. They toppled the progressive popular government of Guatemala in 1954 and set up a series of dictatorial regimes to suppress every scrap of freedom and democracy and reduce the people to poverty and misery.

On February 6, 1962, Guatemalan patriots set up the first guerilla base in the North-west of the country. In 1968, they fought dozens of battles wiping out more than 50 reactionaries including a colonel and many other tyranic officers. They fiercely fired at an important U.S. military base, mounted a bomb attack on the U.S. Embassy and the "Peace Corps" office. They shot dad the Guatemalan Police Chief, the colonel leader of the U.S. advisers' group and the U.S. Ambassador right in a street of the capital.

A few days before the end of 1967, President Montenero claimed that Guatemala had been "pacified", but events in 1968 subsequently contradicted such boastful statements.

Fighting against the common enemy, U.S. imperialism, the Guatemalan people have been giving warm support to the Vietnamese people's resistance against to the U.S. and for national salvation. The Guatemalan — Viet Nam Solidarity Committee came into being and sent a delegation on a visit to Viet Nam in 1966. The Guatemalan people have got a volunteers' unit standing by for Viet Nam. The Guatemalan guerillas have named their strongest resistance zone "Viet Nam fighting base". Many Guatemalan mass organizations have been severely condemning the U.S. aggression and demanding that U.S. troops be withdrawn from South Viet Nam.

In return, the Vietnamese people fully support the Guatemalan people and strongly oppose their persecution and oppression by the U.S. and its henchmen. They wish the Guatemalan people ever greater successes in their protracted and hard struggle against the U.S. and its henchmen, for real independence, freedom and democracy.

U.S. tank destroyed by the PLAF in Tay Ninh province

DRVN Foreign Ministry Protests Thai Sending of Fresh Mercenaries to South Viet Nam

ON January 4, 1969, the Thai authorities announced that they would send 6,000 additional Thai combat troops to South Viet Nam. On January 27, 1969, 1,500 of these troops left for Saigon.

Such a step is a further indication that the ruling circles of Thailand, in their own interests, persist in selling their country and throwing in its lot with the U.S. aggressors whore failure is left in no doubt, and in crudely violating the independence of the South Vietnamese people and the Geneva Agreements.

In a statement dated Feb. 8, 1969, the spokesman of the DRVN Foreign Ministry firmly insisted that the Thai authorities cancel their plan for sending more Thai mercenaries to South Viet Nam, withdraw all their own troops from South Viet Nam and strictly respect the Vietnamese people's national rights.

ON THE LARGE SOUTHERN FRONT

MILITARY OPERATIONS

IN THE VICINITY OF SAIGON

INTENSE and heavy fighting has taken place in the Northwest, Northeast, Southwest and Southeast of Saigon. There are violent fire-fights between the PLAF and the adversary in the Tay Ninh, Ba Ria, Long Khanh, Thu Dau Mot, Long An and My Tho sectors.

IN TAY NINH

On Feb. 2, many battalions of the US 25th Infantry Division and many main force units of the puppet army supported by hundreds of tanks and artillery conducted a sweep against Phuoc Thanh village, Go Dau district (57km Northwest of Saigon). The PLAF engaged the raiders in many battles for 20 hours running, beating off many enemy counter-attacks, wiping out 2 companies of the US 25th Infantry and a major part of a puppet company, putting 300 adverse troops out of action, destroying 25 military vehicles (mostly tanks and armoured cars), and shooting down 4 aircraft (including an F.105).

Between Jan. 21 and Feb. 2, in Go Dau, the PLAF of Tay Ninh province put 500 US-puppet troops out of action, destroyed 48 military vehicles and shot down 5 aircraft.

IN THU DAU MOT

On Jan. 31, the Liberation fighters attacked in force an encampment of a battalion of Brigade 3, US First Infantry, 2 US artillery companies and a US Ranger company in Thi Tinh (Ben Cat district, 55km North of Saigon).

From 11 p.m. Jan. 31 to p. 30 a.m. Feb. 1, the PLAF made an assault and seized the terrain, inflicting casualties on the defenders in hand-to-hand fighting with grenades and hand bombs. In this one hour and a half battle, the Liberation fighters destroyed the battalion HQ and the whole battalion plus 2 artillery companies, putting 500 GIs out of action, destroying eight 105-mm and 155-mm howitzers and four 106 7-mm mortars, shooting down 2 aircraft and burning 14 military vehicles.

IN BA RIA, LONG KHANH

On Feb. 1, regional troops of Long Dien wiped out a company of puppet Division 18 and seized 12 weapons. The lightning attack took place in the open field 60 km Southeast of Saigon.

On Feb. 4, regional troops of Xuan Loc district clashed with a battalion of Regiment 52, same division, 62 km northeast of Saigon and in the fierce combat one company of the said battalion was written off.

Earlier on Jan. 25, in My Tho, the PLAF battled against many battalions of puppet Divisions 7 and 9 in Cai Be 84 km Southwest of Saigon, taking a toll of 100 enemy lives.

On Jan. 28, regional troops of Long An intercepted a battalion of the U.S. 199th Light Infantry Brigade stationed at Binh Duc, 32 km southwest of Saigon, wiping out 76 GIs and bringing down 2 helicopters.

All told, between Jan. 31 and Feb. 4, the PLAF operating in the vicinity of Saigon wiped out or decimated 1 battalion and 7 companies of the US-puppet forces and destroyed 30 military vehicles.

IN THE MEKONG DELTA

Fighting has been most intense in Ben Tre, Tra Vinh and Kien Phong provinces.

In **Ben Tre**: from Feb. 2 to Feb. 4, the enemy mustered 8 battalions of Brigade 2, U.S. 9th Infantry, and of puppet Division 7 for a sweep against 4 villages of Giong Trom district (76 km South of Saigon). In close co-ordination with regional forces, the PLAF engaged various enemy columns in furious fighting as soon as they landed from helicopters, chopping up them one after another. First reports put enemy casualties in the first 2 days at 150 plus 7 helicopters downed. Fighting is still in progress.

In Tra Vinh: on the morning of Feb. 2, regional troops of Vung Liem district assaulted a company of Battalion 1, Regiment 16, puppet Division 9, at Hieu Thanh village, 88 km Southwest of Saigon, completely putting it out of action, capturing 70 men and seizing 30 weapons (including 3 heavy machine-guns).

In **Kien Phong**: On Jan. 25 and 27, regional troops attacked Security Forces Company 138 and a main force company of puppet Division 7 at Kien Van, 100km southwest of Saigon, wiping out 150 and capturing 11 weapons, with Security Forces. Company 138 completely destroyed.

IN THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

GIA LAI province: on Jan. 28, angered by 2 heavy setbacks during Operations *Binh Tay* 48 and 46 in Chu Pa (210 km South-southwest of Da Nang), the enemy hurled 3 battalions of Regiments 47 and 42 of the puppet regular army and Ranger Battalion 22 supported by U.S. troops into Operation *Binh Tay* 50.

Upon reaching the landing zone 2 km South of Chu Pa mountain, Battalion 1 (Regiment 47) and battalion 22 were immediately engaged by the PLAF which wiped out many adverse troops on the spot. On the morning of Jan. 29, they pressed attacks on Battalion 22, killing or wounding 50 of its men. In 3 days, Jan. 28, 29 and 31, the PLAF of Gia Lai put out of action 200 men of puppet battalions 1 and 22.

On Feb. 1, Battalion 4 (Regiment 42) was committed to the field to relieve the battered troops. In their initial blow, the PLAF routed this battalion. Meanwhile, a company of Battalion 1, Regiment 47, was encircled and badly mauled by the PLAF and the puppet captain was killed in action. On Feb. 1, 140 adverse casualties were reported.

On Feb. 2, developing their military gains, the PLAF besieged the remnant troops and gave them further beatings wiping out many of them.

On Feb. 3, the enemy was forced to withdraw from Chu Pa. First reports said that the PLAF in the Central Highlands had fought off Operation *Binh Tay* 50, with 390 enemy casualties (Battalion 1 had 246 killed in action). If adverse losses in the period from Jan. 11 to Jan. 27 were included, the PLAF killed or wounded nearly 2,000 U.S.-puppet troops, destroyed or decimated 7 enemy battalions and shot down 24 aircraft in the Chu Pa area.

Also in the Western Highlands, regional troops of Kontum and Gia Lai inflicted 140 casualties on the enemy between Jan. 27 and Jan. 31, shot down 6 aircraft and destroyed 7 military vehicles.

IN SOUTHERN TRUNG BO

ON Jan. 26, the PLAF of Ninh Thuan made an incursion into Phan Rang airfield (250 km Northeast of Saigon), destroying many runways and set fire to many aircraft of different types. Many warehouses and ammo depots and a radar station held by the Americans were also destroyed. At the parking ground for jet planes, 10 engines were heavily damaged. The airfield was brought to a standstill for 2 days.

In Da Lat, on Jan. 23, regional troops mounted a suprise attack on Battalion 2, puppet Regiment 53, stationed in the southern end of the city, killing or wounding 200 adverse troops.

Apart from these battles, *Giai Phong* Press Agency further reported that in January, the South Viet Nam PLAF sank or burnt 130 enemy vessels on the Long Tau shipping channel (South-east of Saigon), on the Vam Co Dong and Vam Co Tay rivers (Southwest and Northwest of Saigon) and on the Mekong and Cua Viet rivers (Western Nam Bo and close to the 17th parallel respectively)

Members of a PLAF dance and song ensemble playing the "t' rung" (a musical instrument of the High Plateaux people)

AFP on Fruitless "Accelerated Pacification" of Mekong Delta

A recent report by *AFP* spoke of the "omni-presence" in the Mekong delta of the PLAF, who, it said, aremaking "the life of 9th Infantry Division (U.S.) commanders a 24-hour nightmare" and making it "impossible for them to say at any one time that they — or the (puppet) government — "control" any given area of the delta".

"Despite day and night helicopter assaults, the U.S. military cannot determine the exact strength" of the PLAF, the report said. It quoted the U.S. military command as "openly admitting that a whole (PLAF) battalion could regroup under their noses in 24 hours, and a regiment in 48 hours, thanks to the excellent Vietcong communication network."

"Even without any grouping," the report went on, "U.S. GIs... are being constantly sniped at, mortared, and killed or wounded by mines and booby traps... Officers here said every vill.ge in the province had its own guerilla squad who could, if ever the orders were given, execute every (puppet) government official in the area".

It added that when told of puppet Premier Tran Van Huong's recent announcement that the puppet administration's intention was to "pacify" the country "one hundred percent in 1969" "some officers smiled politely but others sniggered".